was thrown lavishly and recklessly into the conflagration to feed the flames as if there were an endless store of available men in reserve, had now practically disappeared. From the purely military aspect the Central Powers seemed stronger and more unbreakable than they had ever been.

Most, if not all, opportunities for manoeuvring the Central Powers out of their vast stronghold had been closed down one by one. Its weak points had been sought out in order to avoid them as if they were traps for the faint-hearted. The High Commands and the Chiefs of Staffs of the Western Powers had concluded that this was to be a war of attrition, and they had so contrived matters that their strategical notion should be the only one left on the board. It was a pre-planned " I told you so.[53] With these themes I deal later on in my chapter on the military situation.

Strategical opportunities not taken

A struggle of endurance

Here I call attention to the fact that the struggle had already become essentially a trial of endurance between nations more than between armies. There were still openings for military skill. Genius can always find or force an opening. The Allies had almost given up looking out for such an instrument of deliverance. The issue of the War now depended on exhaustion. Whose strength would give out first ? Morale, food, man-power, war material and transport—the belligerent group that failed first in one of these

essential elements would lose the War.

In this devastating struggle the resources of all the waning nations had been wellnigh strained to the utmost limit. The nation that made the most economical and efficient use of its remaining strength, having regard to the strategic and economic position